formulate its own policy because this is a perishable industry and for making investment in this sector, one has to get a more lucrative and attractive proposal, so that he can invest in this sector. Sir, I must say that a lot of big players have jumped into this sector now and they are investing in the food processing industry even in the form of contract farming. The backward linking activity is also going on. Even the domestic players of this country have come out in the retail chain. Sir, the retail chain itself will create a big market for this sector, and this is our priority. We have even written to the banks to treat this sector as a priority sector, so that there should not be any problem with regard to loan, etc.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Health hazards of asbestos mining

*101.DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO:

SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Bureau of Mines has conducted study on the health hazards of asbestos mines workers of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the recommendations thereof;

(c) whether the study recommended for lifting of ban on asbestos leasing; and

(d) if so, the details of action taken/proposed to be taken to implement these recommendations including the time-frame for implementation?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Study recommended that the ban imposed on grant and renewal of mining leases and expansion of mining may be lifted subject to control of pollution level in work environment of various operations and other remedial measures.

(d) The proposal of amending Regulation 124 of Metalliferous Mines Regulations, 1961 by way of reducing permissible limit of airborne respirable asbestos fibre dust form 2 to 0.1-0.5 per millilitre of air is under consideraiton in consultation with Directorate General, Mines Safety(DGMS).